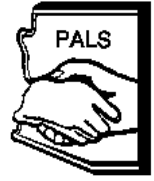




# INFORMATION SHEET

## Parent Information Network



### Mental Retardation

#### What is Mental Retardation?

According to the Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) §15-761 (13), " 'Mental retardation' means a significant impairment of general intellectual functioning that exists concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and that adversely affects the child's performance in the educational environment."

" 'Mild mental retardation' means performance on standard measures of intellectual and adaptive behavior between two and three standard deviations below the mean for children of the same age." [ARS §15-761(14)]

" 'Moderate mental retardation' means performance on standard measures of intellectual and adaptive behavior between three and four standard deviations below the mean for children of the same age." [ARS § 15-761(15)]

" 'Severe mental retardation' means performance on standard measures of intellectual and adaptive behavior measures at least four standard deviations below the mean for children of the same age." [ARS § 15-761(30)]

#### How Common is Mental Retardation?

In the 2004-2005 school year, 8,721 students were classified as having mental retardation and received special education services. This number represents 0.83% of the 1,053,506 children enrolled in Arizona public schools as of October 1, 2004 and accounts for 7.28% of the total special education population.

Mental retardation is a developmental disability, not a disease or mental illness. Many children with mental retardation have genetic abnormalities. Other causes include, but are not limited to, infections during pregnancy, infectious illness in infancy, abnormal delivery, prenatal exposure to drugs and alcohol, lack of mental stimulation, and various medical conditions. According to The Arc, as many as 3 out of every 100 people in the country have mental retardation.

#### What Effect Does Mental Retardation

#### Have on a Child?

Individuals with mental retardation develop social, emotional, academic and physical skills more slowly. Many are mildly or moderately disabled.

Educational services that begin in infancy and continue through preschool years and beyond give children with mental retardation the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential. An appropriate instructional program includes approaches and materials that are interesting, age-appropriate and meaningful to the student. The curriculum should be structured in small blocks of time with frequent review and feedback to make sure that the student can apply the knowledge to tasks inside and outside of the classroom.

An important part of the evaluation process is consideration of Assistive Technology (AT) services. AT can include a wide-range of options from low-technology pictorial schedules and assignments to high-technology communication boards or computers.

Individuals with developmental disabilities benefit from opportunities to be included in activities in their home, school, and community. Lifelong services and support systems that include education, opportunities for self-determination, vocational preparation, health services, daily living skills training, residential alternatives, and recreational options, should be available for persons with disabilities and their families.

#### References

- National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities. (2004). *General information about mental retardation, fact sheet # 8*, Washington, DC: NICHCY.
- The Arc. (2004). *Introduction to Mental Retardation*. Silver Spring, MD: Author.

## Resources

### Books for Adults

- Baker, P.L. & Brightman, A.J. (2004). *Steps to independence: Teaching everyday skills to children with special needs*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing, [www.brookespublishing.com](http://www.brookespublishing.com)
- Falvey, M. (2005). *Believe in My Child with Special Needs!, Helping Children achieve their potential in school*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing, [www.brookespublishing.com](http://www.brookespublishing.com)
- Schwier, K., and Stewart, E. (2005) *Breaking bread, nourishing connections: People with and without disabilities together at mealtime*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing, [www.brookespublishing.com](http://www.brookespublishing.com)
- Wehmeyer, M. L., Ed. (2002). *Teaching children with mental retardation: Providing access to the general curriculum*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing, [www.brookespublishing.com](http://www.brookespublishing.com)

### Books for Children

- McHugh, Mary. (2002). *Special siblings: Growing up with someone with a disability*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing, [www.brookespublishing.com](http://www.brookespublishing.com)
- Rickert, Janet. (2001) *Russ and the almost perfect day*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House, [www.woodbinehouse.com](http://www.woodbinehouse.com)
- Senisi, Ellen. (2002) *All kinds of friends*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House, [www.woodbinehouse.com](http://www.woodbinehouse.com)

### Video Tapes

- Fanlight Productions, 4196 Washington St., Boston, MA 02131, 800-937-4113, [www.fanlight.com](http://www.fanlight.com)
- Program Development Associates, P.O. Box 2038 Syracuse, NY 13220-2038, 800-543-2119, [www.disabilitytraining.com](http://www.disabilitytraining.com)

## Organizations/Hotlines/Web Sites

- Arc of Arizona, Inc., The, 5610 S. Central Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85040, 602-243-1787, 800-252-9054, [www.arcarizona.org](http://www.arcarizona.org)
- Arizona Department of Economic Security, Division of Developmental Disabilities, 1789 W. Jefferson, Phoenix, AZ 85005-6123, 602-542-0419, 866-229-5553, [www.azdes.gov/ddd](http://www.azdes.gov/ddd)
- Council for Exceptional Children, The, Division on Developmental Disabilities, 1110 N. Glebe Rd., Ste. 300, Arlington, VA 22201-5704, 730-264-3660, [www.dddcec.org](http://www.dddcec.org)
- Enhancing Arizona's Parent Networks (EAPN), [www.ade.az.gov/ess/eapn](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/eapn)
- Family Village, [www.familyvillage.wisc.edu](http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu)
- Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, 3839 N. Third Street, Suite 306, Phoenix, AZ 85012, 602-277-4946, 866-771-9378, [www.azgcdd.org/](http://www.azgcdd.org/)
- National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY), P.O. Box 1492, Washington, DC 20013, 800-695-0285, [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)
- Parent Information Network, Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services, 1535 W. Jefferson, Phoenix, AZ 85007, 602-542-3852, [www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinpsals](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinpsals)
- Pilot Parents of Southern Arizona, 2600 N. Wyatt, Tucson, AZ 85712, 520-324-3150, 877-365-7220, [www.pilotparents.org](http://www.pilotparents.org)
- Raising Special Kids, 2400 N. Central, Ste. 200, Phoenix, AZ 85004-1313, 602-242-4366, 800-237-3007, [www.raisingpecialkids.org](http://www.raisingpecialkids.org)
- Special Olympics Arizona, 3816 N. 7<sup>th</sup> St., Phoenix, AZ 85014-5004, 602-230-1200, 800-289-4946, [www.specialolympicsarizona.org](http://www.specialolympicsarizona.org)